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EDITORS: HARRY F. WARD; WINIFRED L. CHAPPELL

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312

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SOME FASCIST TENDENCIES IN THE UNITED STATES

If Fascism is to be stopped in time in this country its symptoms must be recognized and resisted.

FASCISTIC ORGANIZATIONS

Shirts, etc. Numerous little organizations in the tradition of the K. K. K.—which is also again showing its head here and there—spring up across the country. They usually address their appeal to 100% white, Christian Americans. Yet they tend to disparage democracy and to admire Hitler. Some of them adopt uniforms and the sale of these as well as the fees charged sometimes develops into a racket. Some of them openly call themselves Fascists. Others have one or several of the characteristics of Fascism such as leadership of some adventurer; promise of economic reform, impossible under capitalism; organization of a private military force; suppression of opposition by strong-arm methods; incitement of hate against Jews, Communists, Negroes, foreigners; general hostility to militant labor and farm organizations; financial support by big business interests. Among these organizations are the Order of '76, with which Pelley's Silver Shirts, one of the several shirt organizations, is reported to have been merged; the Khaki Shirts; the United States of America Union of Fascists, with Italian membership but appealing to "American citizens who believe in God and the American flag"; the "Crusaders for Economic Liberty," etc.

Anti-semitism. Some of these groups specialize in anti-semitism. John Spivak is telling this story in the *New Masses*. One method of propaganda is the dissemination of the so-called Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Henry Ford once published these in the *Dearborn Independent* and later apologized publicly for doing it. They are now the subject of court proceedings in Berne, Switzerland. The Order of '76, headed by R. S. Gulden of the mustard king family, carries on a "hate the Jew" campaign. Gulden foresees the possible necessity of pogroms because "the Jews are making economic pogroms against us. They are taking our business and professions away." Both the Order of '76 and the Crusader White Shirts distribute by the thousands Senator McFadden's Senate speech in which he attacked the Jews, received from him in sack loads. The speech itself carries the words "Not printed at Government expense." But it is mailed without postage under his franking privilege in envelopes that have in the corner the anti-Jewish sentiment, "Gentiles have the paper while Jews have the gold and lawful money."

"Patriotic" and Business Organizations. Some of the older "patriotic" organizations are also getting in on the anti-Jew movement. There is money in it. Harry A. Jung, of the American Vigilant Intelligence Federation, sells the Protocols in quantity at 60c apiece. At the same time he collects money from the Jewish heads of such great organizations as the Florsheim Shoe Company and Sears, Roebuck, for the alleged purpose of fighting Communism. The National Civic Federation distributes free, and as its own, according to Spivak, the book "Communism in Germany," imported from Germany. Besides being an anti-Communist document (which would make it fit into the program of the N. C. F.) it is strongly anti-Semitic. Some organizations that sell economic services to business men, furnish at the same time anti-Jewish propaganda. The Edmondson Economic Service of Washington and New York sends to the Order of '76, in large quantities for distribution to members, a chart called "The Invisible Government" designed to show the "Jewish-radical minority influence" on the Roosevelt Administration.

Friends of New Germany. The anti-Semitic movement here got underway as early as 1930. It has since been more widely organized by Col. Edwin Emerson, whose headquarters are in the office of the German Consul-General in New York. In part it is

imported from Germany along with strong pro-Nazi propaganda, of which it is a phase. It partly heads up in the Friends of New Germany, which is making headway among the German elements of our population, even the second and third generation. (The boycott of German goods serves to stimulate it.) F. K. Kruppa, former officer of the Friends of New Germany, testified before the Congressional Committee on Un-American activities that Nazi propaganda was being smuggled into this country and distributed through that society; that Nazi "cells" were maintained on all German liners; that direct subsidies came from the German Minister of Propaganda to a sympathetic newspaper here; that German uniforms and drill manuals were used by storm troopers training in New Jersey under the swastika banner.

The Network. The story of Nazi propaganda includes spying and plotting, secret meetings, use of numbers for names, etc. Its open meetings and speakers often have protection of the police who at the same time ruthlessly break up anti-Fascist demonstrations. The movement ramifies out into our political and social life. Emerson works not only with Pelley and Gulden, but with his son Sidney Brooks (he uses his mother's maiden name) who is research man for the Republican Senatorial and Congressional Campaign Committee, and thus is close to Members of Congress. A picked list of representatives and Senators have received copies of a special Hitler number of the *American Illustrated News*, published in Germany in English, and with it a special letter from the editor. The testimony of Ivy Lee, big business propagandist, before the Committee on Un-American Activities was to the effect that his chief work in connection with the German Dye Trust (which pays him \$25,000 a year, with \$5,000 more coming to him from an American subsidiary) was to give advice to the Germans on relations with America; and that this was passed on to the German Government.

The American Type. There are other tendencies moving in the same direction. Huey Long, with his picturesque personality and his program for limitation of wealth—to \$1,000,000—(broadcast wholesale by use of the franking privilege) wins a certain following. From the middle west come reports of a patriotic and military type of organization with army titles and uniforms, parades and brass bands, such as the Spearheads of America, the Americaneers, etc., and of Direct Credits, Inc., which, as the name implies, offers a false economic solution. There are other organizations which arouse utopian dreams and nationalism and lead into "solutions" that fasten down control by big business. Still others talk bravely in general terms about abolishing capitalism, but if their concrete program is carried out it will assist it to a longer lease of life.

How far will these go with the American type of mind? Does the answer depend on the extent of the loss of economic security? And what else? Does it depend also on the effectiveness of counter-propaganda? What is our responsibility?

TERRORISM

Some of the fascistic organizations, like their Italian and German prototypes, function in part by attacking radical street meetings, breaking up demonstrations, etc. This is part of a much larger story of terrorism. Here and there across the country, especially in workers' and farmers' strikes, unemployment demonstrations, etc., mobs of enraged citizens, self-constituted "vigilantes," sometimes paid thugs take a hand. Often they are inspired by "patriots" and are subsidized by business interests. Red squadrons in police departments and incitements by some public officials, governors, mayors, etc., are part of the story.

Against the Reds. Often the attacks are directed against radicals, especially Communists. This was the case in most of the raids by vigilantes in California during and after the coast strike. These cases are typical: At Haywood Communist headquarters were raided, furniture was demolished, desks were dragged into the street and set on fire, a scaffold was erected before the city hall with the legend "Reds Beware." At Modesta, vigilantes raided radical headquarters, smashed every piece of furniture, beat with a club G. C. Nutter and A. R. Perry who were asleep there. In Richmond the photograph studio of W. J. Prater was entered by vigilantes, the furniture and equipment were smashed and he was warned not to associate with radicals. (See the *Nation*, August 29, for a long—but partial—list of these anti-red raids.)

Breaking Unions and Strikes. Sometimes terroristic methods are used to wreck labor unions and break strikes. Various devices are employed. Here are some examples: *Chicago.* A committee of the Chicago Federation of Labor appointed to investigate the anti-union activities of State's Attorney Tom Courtney of Cook County, reports that his specially detailed police have broken up picket lines; that union officials have been threatened with bodily harm, punched and kicked around; that union offices have been raided without warrant, officers arrested, desks broken, etc. *Pennsylvania.* Vigilantes were organized in anticipation of the silk workers' strike in Williamsport in August and when it occurred they broke up a strike meeting, virtually kidnaped organizers Benti and Yaeger and turned them over to the police. *Rhode Island.* A worker participant tells of the Moshassuck battle during the textile strike: "The deputies were drunk . . . State Troopers hurled tear gas and began whacking us with long riot clubs . . . 20 deputies opened up with buckshot." *Georgia.* A correspondent of the *N. Y. Post* describes one of the

concentration camps—an innovation in the United States—established near Atlanta in the textile strike. One hundred and fifty strikers were placed under military arrest by National Guardsmen. They were "herded into trucks at bayonet point . . . rushed 39 miles to a National Guard rifle range . . . the men pickets . . . kept standing . . . in the truck for hours . . . the 20 women pickets . . . herded into one of three corrugated iron shacks . . . no sewerage . . . no sanitation . . . National Guardsmen were hastily erecting a barbed wire stockade . . ."

Terrorizing Agricultural Workers. *California.* The Conference for Labor's Civil Rights reports on the strike of Filipino lettuce-pickers at Salinas: "A 'vigilante' gang surrounded a Filipino labor camp under cover of darkness, fired hundreds of shots from guns and rifles, cut the phone and power lines, and set fire to the buildings while the Filipino inmates were inside. . . . Simultaneously in Salinas 15 uniformed police raided the Filipino union hall, clubbed the members wantonly, arrested every Filipino in the hall (about 50)." *New Jersey.* During a strike of workers on the 3000-acre Seabrook Farms at Bridgeton in July, women and children were clubbed and gassed; strikers were thrown into jail without hearings and were not permitted to consult counsel; vigilantes attacked union leaders. Prof. Colston Warne tells of the organization of the vigilantes at a meeting of several hundred farm owners of the county which was addressed by C. F. Seabrook, president of the Farms. *Ohio.* For many days in August terror reigned in the Scioto onion marshes in Hardin County. Okey O'Dell, union strike leader, was kidnapped and severely injured. He was defended against threatened lynching by fellow workers. In the nearby town of McGuffey, self-styled "tough guys" and "vigilantes," some with special deputy badges, bragged about what they would do to the strikers.

Also Mid-Western Farmers. The *Farmers' National Weekly* reports these stories: *South Dakota.* Last summer, drunken American Legionnaires armed and led by the sheriff of Marshall County kidnapped J. Walsted, officer of the United Farmers League, and five other farmer members of the Farm School on Wheels, took them to a basement, beat them and forced them to run the gauntlet. Local business men furnished beer. *Michigan.* In August, George Casper, secretary of the Michigan Farmers League, was kidnapped from a farmers' meeting in Custer by a well-organized lynch mob of deputies and constables. Business men were members of the crowd which yelled "Get Casper. Hang Casper." The Roach Canning Co. of Scottsville is charged with organizing the mob. *Nebraska.* Gangsters equipped with brass knuckles and gas pipes entered a mass meeting of Negro and white workers and farmers in Loup City near Grand Island last summer. Bert Sellers, a speaker, was critically injured. A paper was handed to the chairman signed "Respectable citizens of Loup City." It warned all Grand Island people to get out of Loup City by 5 o'clock. "Mother" Bloor and a Negro organizer and his wife were arrested.

Terrorizing Negroes. Lynching is part of this story of terror. There were 37 cases in the United States in 1932, 47 in 1933 (5 of these not Negroes). There have been 24 thus far in 1934. The latest case is that of the 24-year-old Negro, Claude Neal. He was kidnapped in Alabama, taken across the line into Florida and held captive 36 hours while his lynching was openly announced and discussed. Protests to state authorities and to U. S. Attorney-General Cummings were without avail. Neal was mutilated with knives and riddled with bullets, his body dragged behind an automobile for several miles and hung to a tree in the court yard.

Attacks on Unemployed. The use of terror against hunger marchers has become common. Some current cases: In Cleveland on October 29th police brutally attacked 2500 workers demonstrating before the city council for more adequate relief. The next day Mayor Davis gave out a statement in which he said, "On previous occasions when I was mayor we settled once for all who is boss of this town. I am serving notice that demonstrations such as occurred last night at City Hall will be broken up immediately." (His reference was to the breaking up of the May Day demonstration in 1919.) In Denver on October 30th two workers were shot and many injured when police fired into a mass picket line which was trying to stop work on an FERA project in protest against recent relief cuts. The same day Albany, N. Y., police attacked 200 state "hunger marchers" at the bridge leading into the city, dragged delegates from trucks, clubbed, beat and arrested many—two dozen had to be sent to a hospital—and forced the rest to spend the night without blankets or shelter in a field. In Phoenix, Ariz., in August, striking FERA workers who had just been addressed by Roy Burt, Methodist preacher, were attacked by police. When a committee came from the Ministerial Association to protest, one member, E. W. Stricker, was manhandled by a deputy sheriff, and another was told, "You had better shut up or you will talk yourself into arrest."

Student Vigilantes. At the University of California at Los Angeles, where 5 students have been suspended for alleged radical activities, student vigilantes, calling themselves U. C. L. A. Americans, vow they will free the university of radicalism, with force if necessary. Berkeley students meeting near the campus to protest the U. C. L. A. suspensions were greeted with a shower of eggs and tomatoes by a mob of fellow students acting as vigilantes. A similar group broke up a student protest meeting at San Mateo Junior College and tried to kidnap the speakers. A few weeks earlier at the College of the City of New York students calling themselves vigilantes, one of them in R. O. T. C.

uniform, tore banners from the hands of students picketing the home of President Robinson. The picketers were protesting the suspension of C. C. N. Y. students who had actively opposed the college reception of the student delegation from Fascist Italy.

What makes such incidents signs of a growing Fascism when similar things a few years ago were not so classified? Is it because they arise out of a fear that new forces are threatening to get control of the state to organize a new order of life? Is it because the classes which have been struggling over the division of income are now beginning to struggle for the control of society?

REPRESSION

While vigilantes and constituted authorities attack radicals, unionists, and liberal sympathizers with labor, various influences operate to suppress opinion and to hamper activity looking toward social change. This also is an expression of Fascism, which in its broadest aspect is a turning backward into the past of those who cannot go forward into the future at a moment when it is impossible to stay where we are. Thus it serves those who profit from reaction and crushes those who need a new order.

Union Activities Hampered. Numerous ways are being found to head off labor organization. Within six months in California at the height of the recent labor conflict the boards of supervisors in over 20 counties put anti-picketing ordinances on the statute books. Dismissal of workers for union activities is common. That was a main issue in the A. & P. conflict in Cleveland. This form of repression extends to white-collar workers. The management of the New York Public Library has issued an order forbidding its employees to discuss organizational problems in the library and from distributing leaflets of any kind on library premises under penalty of immediate discharge.

Written Opinion Penalized. A. J. Muste, of the American Workers' Party, was arrested last summer in central Illinois for having in his possession printed matter which stated, "A crumbling, insane, unjust economic order stands in the way. We will sweep it aside, organize to take power into our own hands." A theological seminary undergraduate was arrested on the charge of sedition in Danielson, Conn., during the textile strike in September. This was the first time in many years that that charge had been invoked in that state. The occasion for his arrest was the handing out of about 15 reprints from the *Daily Worker* to a group of mill workers.

Loyalty Oath for Teachers. Governor Lehman of New York has recently signed the Ives bill, which requires all teachers in the state in private, as well as public schools to promise to support the state and federal constitutions. (Fifteen states have such laws. The D. A. R. has been active in their enactment.) Immediately thereafter the New York City Board of Education called on its examiners to take measures to detect and exclude certain types of teachers. Teachers must not only know the history of their country, but they must "take pride in it." To this the Chairman of the Board replied, outlining methods by which this would be accomplished. He urged upon principals "the need of discriminating observation of the conduct and attitude of teachers on probationary tenure."

State Control Over Conscience. Compulsory military training prevails in 90 colleges and universities and 28 civil secondary schools in this country. The requirement has been challenged on the ground of conscience by three Methodist students, Ennis Coale of the University of Maryland, and Albert Hamilton and Alonzo Reynolds, Jr., of the University of California in Los Angeles. Thus the question has been raised whether sincere, religious conscientious objectors to military training have a legal right in peacetime to exemption from military training in public, tax-supported, educational institutions. In both cases the universities suspended the students. In both, the State Supreme Court upheld the university. In the former, the U. S. Supreme Court declined to accept jurisdiction. The latter case is now before that Court. In Ohio Methodist preachers are vigorously taking issue with the president of the State University who has recently said publicly that he finds it "administratively impossible" to grant further exemption in cases of this kind.

These signs of the times confront us with an imperative challenge. Are we going to unite with all available forces in a determined effort to keep the democratic process functioning as an instrument for social change before the forces of reaction become too strong for us to resist them?

Sources. In addition to those noted in the text, pamphlets on Fascism issued by American Civil Liberties Union, New America, League for Industrial Democracy and American League Against War and Fascism; reports and releases of A. C. L. U.; *New York Times*; *Federated Press*; *Daily Worker*; reports by preachers.

Correction. The May BULLETIN carried the statement—taken from a source usually reliable—that a good part of the TVA appropriation of \$50,000,000 is going for explosive factories. It appears that none of the money is so used. We regret the error.—EDITORS.

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